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ABSTRACT

Whether principals could identify teaching traits and categorize these consistently as descriptors of instructional stages was studied by asking 145 randomly selected principals in public schools throughout Illinois and Indiana to characterize teacher behavior based on experience. Principals were asked to list instructional stages, yielding 161 usable teaching characteristics. Another sample of 50 principals was then surveyed to derive, under principal component factor analysis, 5 factors appearing to fit the projected career development model. The sequential stages derived indicated that no age limit could be attached to the effectiveness cycle for a teacher. Appendices list variables for five different factors: (1) provisional stage; (2) development state; (3) decelerating stage; (4) stagnant stage; and (5) terminal stage. (SLD)

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PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS OF INSTRUCTIONAL STAGES BASED ON FELT TEACHING CHARACTERISTICS

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I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to determine if principals could identify teaching traits and consistently categorize these traits as descriptors of instructional stages. Ryans (1960) theorized that a teacher's effectiveness would continue to rise, level off, and at about the age of 50 would drastically decline. This study sought to further define the rise and decline of teacher effectiveness by identifying levels of instructional transfer that, barring any rejuvenation practices, would readily introduce certain stages that a teacher may enter throughout a career. It also sought to identify behaviors characterizing one instructional stage from another.

Current trends in teacher morale have indicated a need to promote effective programs that would constantly rejuvenate teachers and provide a continuous motivational climate for instruction. The controversy has been whether to mandate more teacher education, more teacher certification, more teacher evaluation, and/or more teacher incentives to improve the quality and excellence.

Much effort has been made in recent years to try to improve the quality of teaching. In an attempt to resolve the issue, teacher certification requirements have been raised for potential teachers, while in-service training, workshops, and staff development programs have been instituted for the teacher work force.

Before 1800 the concept of teacher preparation for classroom responsibilities was not practiced. Emphasis on methodology and pedagogical principles was non-extant. As a result, teacher

preparation developed slowly during the rise of the public school from 1837 to 1865. Genzi and Myers (1968) asserted that the characteristics envisioned for the ideal teacher then included some of the same characteristics seen today. They reported a high moral character as self-instruction was the primary mode of preparation for teaching. To acquire certification, the candidate took an examination concerning his knowledge of educational subjects. The provisions were professionally archaic and inadequate when compared to today's standards.

From 1865 to 1910 emphasis was placed on the curriculum. In 1899 the National Education Association Committee promoted that the educational society must first prepare prospective teachers in subject areas to be effective. Genzi and Myers (1968) reported that admission requirements for teachers were lifted as a result of action taken by the American Association of Teachers in the early 1920's. In 1923 the same association adopted a policy mandating four years of high school preparation for admission to teacher training programs.

Since 1940 there has been a significant increase in the amount of emphasis placed on certification requirements with four years of preparation beyond secondary school being systematically accepted. From 1977 some 30 states have adopted some type of teacher assessment program which grew out of public anxiety.

Recent reports have sought to reveal the seriousness of the condition of education. The most noted was prepared by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1980). 'A Nation At Risk' set the stage for an increasing awareness in educational reform. The commission concluded that an increased level of mediocrity in schools

and an educational disarmament are resulting in a deficiency for basic education.

The success or failure of the public schools has been largely dependent on the skills and talents of the teacher. Secretary of Education, William Bennett, reported in the Phi Delta Kappan (1985) that a teacher needs to be one who is well educated, has social and moral character, and who likes children. The Kappan also reported that knowledge would not guarantee quality teaching but that the teaching techniques used would motivate the students.

Much research has been developed to find the key attributes that are conducive to quality teaching. Yet, the question has awaited an appropriate answer. Public pressure upon schools to adequately and economically prepare students has generated a response on the part of school officials to account for their efforts. However, while these efforts may have satisfied organizational and state requirements, they have often failed to attend to the personal needs of the teacher. Neil (1985) argued that a danger existed in evaluation research activity in that, while knowledge and skill may be easily gauged, attitudinal factors may be overlooked because they are more difficult to change. However, it is these personal attitudes that can differentiate a productive educational environment from a non-productive environment.

Teaching has been deemed a very demanding and frustrating career. What teachers do in a classroom has an effect on students. Thus, teaching behavior must be varied for students of different socio-economic, mental, and psychological characteristics. What may produce positive results in one area may produce negative results in another.

This fact has discouraged any development of 'rules for teaching behavior' that could be generally applied.

Increasing public dissatisfaction with the school system has been due mainly to accountability, i.e., the rising cost of public education versus the decreasing scores on a variety of achievement tests. Pressures that have been placed on productivity helped precipitate a variety of negative attitudes for both the profession and for the teacher. These negative attitudes adversely affect classroom performance and teachers' self-esteem. A teacher's self-esteem culminated an intricate ingredient for performance output. Dunham (1984) cited four areas that teachers encounter in a stressful situation. These included frustration, anxiety, exhaustion, and burnout. Although these areas may not include the classroom situation, constant criticism of teaching ability could be destructive not only to the individual, but to the organization and students as well.

To facilitate the demands for quality education, appropriate organizational programs must be implemented to assure continuous, motivational practices. The manner in which teachers perform in the classroom setting has been determined by factors that go beyond college training and certification. It has been a general practice that any individual could enter a classroom immediately after graduation and begin to teach. However, individuals differ in personality, style, and ability. Certification does not necessarily assure the individual will be a productive member of the education team. In contrast, there are many fine educators who deserve recognition for their contributions.

A lack of positive reinforcement could have an influence on the

individual's self-esteem. Reinforcement of teachers' positive contributions and abilities has always been an important aspect in rejuvenating teachers to continually develop a high level of commitment. If there is a professional let-down, the learning process becomes mechanically oriented. Bloom (1982) suggested that the students could learn a great deal on their own outside the school environment. On the contrary, in the school environment students must learn from the available instructional materials and from the teacher. Lessinger (1970), in producing his basic rights of democratic education, stipulated that each child had a right to be taught what he needed to know in order to take a productive part in society. This idea has been the long standing objective of the educational system since the 'acculturation of immigrants' philosophy in the early part of this century.

During the past years, much emphasis has been placed on the product from public education. Wise (1977) proposed that if a student fails to learn, his teacher may be violating the law and therefore committing a crime. While this maybe a bit extreme, it does point out the seriousness of an unproductive environment.

In addition to this, frustration in teaching provided the catalyst that forced hundreds of teachers out of the profession. In one local Tennessee survey, Klenbenow (1983) found that 65% of the respondents had doubt about returning to teaching as a profession. Although this report was not indicative of all locales, it demonstrated a need to reassess the profession.

The teacher and organization must be mutually able to provide

rejuvenation techniques that reinforce the teachers' confidence in their ability to have a positive influence on students. Denham and Michael (1981) revealed this concept in their research on self-efficacy. They found that high teacher self-efficacy is associated with improvement in student academic performances and self-concepts. They also pointed out that teacher efficacy is related to innovation, professional improvement, and job satisfaction. In another study, Combs and Snygg (1959) proposed that the maintenance and enhancement of the perceived self is the motive behind all behavior. This proposal followed their theory that motivation is that of personal contribution.

It must be understood, at this point, that personal motivation may not produce the type of production that is expected by the district. The organization must also provide techniques that will interact with personal motivation to produce continuous, professional rejuvenation and job satisfaction for positive results. It must also provide techniques that will enhance personal motivation if it is detected that none exists.

II. METHODOLOGY

The instrument used in this study was the 161 teaching characteristics selected from a 1983, two-state exploratory study in Illinois and Indiana. The subjects used in this phase I study included 145 randomly selected principals throughout Illinois and Indiana public schools. Each had a minimum of 15 years administrative experience as a building principal and had direct supervisory and evaluative responsibility. This population of practitioners was isolated due to familiarity with the faculty over a period of years.

Regarding appropriate and inappropriate motivational and instructional management practices, the subjects were asked, "How would a first year teacher differ from a fifth year teacher; a fifth year teacher from a tenth year teacher; etc? The subjects were then asked, based on their evaluative experience, to list a series of instructional stages they believed teachers would enter from their first year of employment through retirement. Finally, they were asked to provide several characteristics they felt differentiated one instructional stage from another. Data analysis produced 161 usable characteristics that were the basis for this research project.

This phrase II research was a descriptive study, thus face validity of these characteristics was assumed based on the subjects' reliability assessment as administrators. This instrument was designed to allow the principals latitude in their associations without being exhaustive in nature. The instructional stages coincided with teachers in their first, fifth, tenth, twentieth, and thirtieth year of experience. The subjects assigned each item to a corresponding level of experience they felt correctly described a teacher at that particular stage of a career. This action promoted the directional hypothesis that "Teaching Characteristics Will Non-Randomly Fall And Be Identified Within Pre-Determined Stages Based On Principal's Perceptions."

Fifty principals from each of the six states in the Mid-South Education Region were mailed the 161 teaching characteristics and proposed instructional stages. A letter of introduction and a general description of the study accompanied the teaching characteristics. A

self-addressed, stamped envelope was also enclosed in order for the subjects to return the instrument at no cost to them. If the pre-determined number of responses was not reached, a follow-up post card was mailed reminding them to respond. If the number of returns was still insufficient after the post card, a telephone call was made to further remind them, or to determine if another instrument needed to be mailed. Data analysis was based on the results of 103 respondents.

Factor analysis was the statistical technique utilized for the treatment of data to determine the significance of variables to the instructional stages. Results of the factor analysis identified teaching characteristics which would serve as descriptors of each instructional stage.

The original 161 items were subjected to principal component factor analysis. Since the SPSS program used to analyze the data could handle a maximum of 100 items, the instrument was split into two parts and two separate principal component analyses were run. In the analysis approximately ten factors and items loading to these factors were first investigated. Items in each of the two separate initial analyses which loaded as much as .25 were isolated and identified within the first ten factors. This analysis yielded 98 items and were combined in a new principal component factor analysis with orthogonal rotation. The final analysis yielded five factors and the variables contributing to each of the factors described clusters that made logical sense in terms of the career development model that was being investigated. Data being reported in this analysis was derived from oblique rotation when the orthogonal rotation produced unclear factors.

After these factors were identified and described, a frequency analysis was conducted for each item within a set that was factored. This action was taken to determine the level of career development to which subjects had indicated the variable to be. The mode was then determined for the frequency levels, i.e., if the subjects felt that this item was characteristic of a beginning teacher, a scale would be characterized by the number "1".

The reduction to five factors produced preliminary clusters that described certain levels of instruction, but appeared not to be sequential according to the proposed model. An average of the modal measurements for each stage produced instructional levels that were sequential in nature and logically described associations of distinct separation of stages.

From this the derived factors were associated with the career development model. In this analysis it was found that there was a strong sense of identity for the frequency of these responses at each of the career intervals. (See Appendices A - E) For example, items in factor 1 resembled an individual that was aggressive, self-assured, but a bit timid, somewhat unprepared, and warm. From data analysis this stage best described a beginning teacher who sought to develop the tools necessary to produce positive, educational results. The enthusiasm and desire was reflected in the approach to education; however, it was sometimes mistaken for arrogance. Acceptance by peers proved paramount to the success as a teacher in the first few years.

Factor 2 depicted an individual who was conscientious, stimulating and innovative, possessed leadership qualities, and had a high self-

worth interpretation. It further described a teacher past the provisional stage who was continually up-dating instructional techniques. The teaching behavior was product-oriented with effective results while promoting organizational and community values and objectives.

Items in factor 3 characterized an individual who was egotistical, business-like, structured, and subjective. Analysis further described an experienced teacher who was highly systematized, but failed to develop further or expand instructional capabilities. This stage produced the beginnings of an instructional routine that was coupled with a decrease in individual and student expectation. Teaching as a joy was being replaced by teaching as a job while educational changes were becoming tedious in nature.

Monotonous, unimaginative, unmotivated, and controlled best described a person in factor 4. This teacher's lack of initiative produced a laissez-faire classroom attitude whereby sequential learning was repetitious was style and porous in nature. Although there was simulated instruction, no extra effort for increased productivity could be noticed. This aspect produced a type of instruction that was transgressed beyond administrative expectations. Classroom material remained unchanged from year to year, while burnout symptoms increased in intensity.

Factor 5 depicted an individual who was ineffective, unproductive, uncaring, and self-oriented. This teacher was either close to retirement or has mistaken teaching as a career. Students appeared to run the classroom setting, initiate procedures, and enter in a self-

learning atmosphere. Although the room appeared productive, there was a failure to provide instructional leadership. This failure negated the requirement to fulfill the in-depth, curricular content necessary for a complete, educational exposure and thereby produced false results.

III. DISCUSSION

Analysis of the study revealed that practitioners' responses under principal component factor analysis, could identify a series of instructional stages in an educational environment and associate certain characteristics with each stage. The data provided the basis to offer critical analysis of staff development and personal achievement practices as effective rejuvenation techniques.

One result further validated the career model of instructional transfer as a guideline for provisional teachers to analyze their performance skills, for experienced teachers to analyze their self-renewal practices, and for administrators to analyze appropriate development strategies for continual contributions to educational achievement. An individual assessment of this model might enhance appropriate self-evaluation practices.

Personal and organizational strategies must utilize harmony in rejuvenation practices. Through a positive relationship, emphasis on instructional achievement will enhance the educational environment and provide the students with the best educational offering. With the day to day pressures associated with teaching, it becomes imperative to recognize teachers heading or located in the decelerating or stagnant stages and redirect their energies toward the rejuvenation cycle.

IV. CONCLUSION

In this study five factors were derived from 103 respondents. The components appeared to fit the projected career development model of instructional transfer and support the hypothesis. Also, the order of these factors from the average modal measurement produced a series of stages that were sequential in nature which further defined Ryans's (1960) theory of teacher effectiveness. This definition, unlike Ryans's theory, appeared to signify that no age limit could be attached to the effectiveness cycle, i.e., an individual could reach the terminal stage in a few years if teaching was incorrectly chosen as a profession, or a negative initial exposure was experienced. This project promoted the need for continued research to isolate personality traits that would seek to identify individual teachers in specific instructional stages. Personal behaviors and traits of teachers need to be investigated in order to correlate the perceptions of teachers with the perceptions of the principals. This accomplishment would offer identification of specific needs and allow suitable staff development techniques. These techniques could be effectively utilized by a district for appropriate groups of teachers. This, in turn, would enhance performance skills and re-direct energies toward positive, educational production. The final result would be directed toward an effective self-evaluation instrument that had the capability to characterize the level of instructional transfer of each individual teacher. Outside the teaching profession there is much to be researched relative to occupational stages. This model needs to be validated in other areas and compared to any models that may exist.

Appendix A

Variables Loading To Factor 1: Provisional Stage

Variable	Loading	Modal Response
Little Subject Matter Development	-.62313	4
Eager	.46877	1
Promotes Good Character	.41449	3
Problem-Solving Techniques	.35811	2
Friendly, Outgoing	.33262	1
Teacher/Student Learning Relationship	-.32322	4
Refusal To Accept Constructive Criticism	.32241	4
Student Achievement	.32045	2
Minimal Self-Improvement Practices	.29703	4
Low Emotional Adjustment	-.27206	1

Appendix B

Variables Loading To Factor 2: Development State

Variables	Loading	Modal Response
Inductive Approach To Education	.45559	2
Non-Directive Classroom Procedures	.43075	5
Personal Improvement	.41164	2
Individual Initiative	.40969	3
Student-Centered Environment	.38398	3
Decrease In Evaluation Of Student's Progress	-.37947	4
Correct Grammar Usage	.37251	3
Trial And Error For Instructional Method	.34980	2
Values Exactness In Classroom Operations	.33816	4
Lack Of Cooperation In Immaterial Concerns	.32787	5
Appropriate Classroom Management Techniques	.32045	3
Approachable To All Students And Peers	.30486	2

Appendix C

Variables Loading To Factor 3: Decelerating Stage

Variables	Loading	Modal Response
Efficient Time-Management Skills	-.53988	2
Survival Mode From Paycheck To Paycheck	-.44333	5
High Assessment Of Ability	-.40425	3
Subject-Matter Preparation	-.33743	2
Negative Reinforcement Of Student's Progress	.32373	5
Happily Married	.32012	3
Displays Arrogance In Job Performance	-.31407	4
Personal Self-Efficacy Evaluation	-.30806	2
Does Not Associate With Change	.30778	5
Decrease In Climate Criteria Development	.30689	4
Personal Satisfaction	-.25861	3

Appendix D

Variables Loading To Factor 4: Stagnant Stage

Variables	Loading	Modal Response
Authoritarian Classroom Behavior	.53985	5
Consistent Assessment + or - In Observations	.47732	3
Inconsistent Classroom Management Practices	.42038	5
Less Motivation	.36866	4
Promotes A State Of Self Control	.34310	3
Independent	.33862	5
Semi-Conscious Of Effectiveness	.31310	3
Semi-Favorable Attitude Towards Students	.29058	3
Decreased Subject-Matter Content	.26551	4

Appendix E

Variables Loading To Factor 5: Terminal Stage

Variables	Loading	Modal Response
Day To Day Function In A Limited Dimension	.44985	5
Decline In Job Satisfaction	.42388	4
Restricted Teaching Attitude	.38321	5
Generic Educational Offering	.37822	5
Armchair Teaching Tactics	.34364	5
Student to Student Learning Relations	-.33732	3
Self-Evaluation Skills	.32974	3
Open Learning Environment	-.32084	3
Low Self-Esteem	.31335	5
Sincere	.30267	3
Low Organizational Interests	.29913	5
Group-Centered Learning	-.27751	3
Few Personal Development Practices	.26941	4
Impartial In Decision-Making	-.26819	3
No Vision Development	.26009	5

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